

New Silver Shirt Clan With Incredible Credo Secretly Organized Here

Weird Order, Beset by Unbelievable Fears and Hatreds, Claims Six Thousand Members in Minnesota

Movements in which emotionalism displaces reason are characteristic of periods of political and social unrest. Rumors and whispered alarms have become increasingly evident in Minneapolis in the last six months.

The Silvershirts is an organization under the leadership of William Dudley Pelley of Asheville, N. C. Minneapolis residents, evidence showed, have joined this group and the affiliated "Christian Party." The Journal presents today the first of a series describing the beliefs and preachments of Minneapolis members of the organization. They are written by a member of The Journal staff who has seen and talked with these members in meeting and out; heard them talk of 100 per cent Americanism—while subscribing to the organization's subversive principles. Some of these stories will present extremes; others will describe typical attitudes. All of them will seem incredible. But they are based on verified experience.

By ARNOLD SEVAREID

You probably won't believe this story.

It concerns an organization now active in Minneapolis—known as the Silvershirts.

It concerns secret meetings, whispers of dark plots against the nation and the Silvershirts incredible credo.

Members of this organization talk about ideas and goals so fantastic that anyone who has heard them in meeting as I have goes away wondering if he still lives in America of 1936.

Then he wonders if Sinclair Lewis could have been wrong, after all, when he wrote "It Can't Happen Here."

Organization Takes on The Color of Fascism

The Silvershirts organization smacks of Fascism. It claims, one organizer told me, 300,000 members in the United States, of which 6,000 are in Minnesota.

Properly speaking, the Silvershirts are the inner circle. Membership is restricted to men. Affiliated, however, is the "Christian Party," the semi-political "outer circle."

The "Christian party" is a recent development, though the Silvershirts are not much older. One heard the first whispered rumors of them in 1933. They have been organized in Minneapolis about six months.

Hate and fear bind the members together—hatred and fear and the hypnosis of the secret-society phobia.

Reasoning such as theirs could live only in the hypnotic atmosphere of quasi-mystic secrecy.

Fascist in pattern, they have taken a fascist cry for their watchword. They want to segregate all Jews in one city in Minnesota. Anti-Semitism is the outstanding feature of the Silvershirts.

Absurd as it may seem, to them the World war, the present war in Spain (from where the Jews were expelled in 1492) and all the wars

of the world were deliberately inspired by Jews.

Static on Radio Is Laid to Plot

One woman confided in me that the static which interfered with the radio programs she wanted to hear was purposely broadcast by Jews.

The Silvershirts national leader, a man who would like to be president, is William Dudley Pelley. Today he is on the west coast organizing his Silvershirts under the battle cry "Down with the Reds and Out With the Jews." In the minds of his people all Jews are Communists and all Communists are Jews.

If one points out certain known Communists who are definitely Nordic, their answer is—"Well, he must have a Jewish mind." None seems quite certain what composes a Jewish mind, however.

Leaders Do Not Urge Direct Action

The leaders are quite bombastic about it all.

They write dire words in the literature of their organization.

Never do they advocate direct action against Jews, but they come dangerously near incitement. In "Pelley's Weekly," official organ of the Silvershirts, Pelley has said editorially that Christians must

treat Jews "drastically." And then he defines the meaning of "pogrom." He says:

"A pogrom, lest there be any among us unfamiliar with the word, is a wholesale slaughter of Jews merely because they are Jews...."

The activities of the Silvershirts are just beginning to come to general attention.

TOMORROW—Who Is Mr. Rosenfelt?